

§ 3. Standard Times in Australia.

Prior to 1895 the official time adopted in the several colonies was for most purposes the mean solar time of the capital city of each.

In November, 1892, an intercolonial conference of surveyors was held in Melbourne to consider, among other things, the advantages of introducing the system of standard time. In this system it was proposed to make the initial meridian that of Greenwich and to change local standard time by whole hours according to the longitude east or west of that of Greenwich. Thus for every difference of 15° in longitude a change of one hour would be required. The minutes and seconds would then be identical everywhere.

To give effect to this proposal it was suggested that Australia should be divided into three zones, the standard times for which should be respectively the mean solar times of the meridians of 120° , 135° and 150° E. longitude, thus giving standard times 8, 9 and 10 hours respectively ahead of Greenwich time. It was proposed that the 120° zone should comprise Western Australia, that the 135° zone should comprise South Australia and the Northern Territory, and that the 150° zone should comprise Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania.

The matter was also considered by several intercolonial postal conferences, and eventually in 1894 and 1895 legislation was enacted by each of the colonies in accord with the recommendations of the Surveyors' Conference of 1892.

In 1898 the South Australian legislature amended its earlier provision, and adopted the mean solar time of the meridian $142^\circ 30'$ E. longitude as the standard time for that colony, thus reducing the difference between the standard time of Adelaide and that of the capitals of the eastern colonies from an hour to half-an-hour. Particulars concerning these enactments are as follows :—

STANDARD TIMES IN AUSTRALIA.

State.	Date when Act came into Operation.		Meridian Selected.	Time Ahead of Greenwich.
				Hours.
New South Wales ..	1st February, 1895 ..	150° E.	10	
Victoria ..	1st February, 1895 ..	150° E.	10	
Queensland ..	1st January, 1895 ..	150° E.	10	
South Australia ..	1st February, 1895 ..	135° E.	9	
South Australia ..	1st May, 1899 ..	142° 30' E.	9½	
Western Australia ..	1st December, 1895 ..	120° E.	8	
Tasmania ..	1st September, 1895 ..	150° E.	10	

The standard time in the Australian Capital Territory is the same as in New South Wales, and in the Northern Territory the same as in South Australia.

Consequent upon the opening of the Trans-Australian Railway an arrangement was made by which the change of time between South Australia and Western Australia (namely, $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours) is divided into two changes of 45 minutes each. Going east from Kalgoorlie the first change is made at Rawlinna, 235.18 miles out, where the time is put forward by 45 minutes. The second change of the same amount is made at Tarcoola, 794.05 miles out. Thenceforward South Australian standard time is kept. The Commonwealth Observatory at Mount Stromlo, Canberra, and the State Observatories at Sydney and Perth derive time by astronomical observations.

Time signals are originated by these Observatories and by the Postmaster-General's Research Laboratory, Melbourne. The latter participates with the Commonwealth Observatory in the Commonwealth Time Service.